



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1948.

F.W.S. AQUARIUM DISPLAYS RARE ALBINO BULLFROGS

Bullfrogs have grey or brownish eyes. Their bodies are colored in varying shades of green or brown. But about once in a million times, biologists estimate, albinism occurs, and a bullfrog is born with pink eyes and a weak yellow-colored body.

Two of these rare albino specimens will be put on public display tomorrow at the Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium, John C. Pearson, Aquarium director, announces.

Presented as a gift to the Service by Fred Tresselt, Thurmont, Md., goldfish breeder, the albino bullfrogs have just grown out of the tadpole stage, and are about 13 months old. They are handicapped by deficient eyesight, a characteristic of all albinos.

They join what is probably the largest variety of albino specimens in any aquarium. Twelve albino channel catfish, two albino Louisiana freshwater turtles, 300 albino brook trout, and an albino diamond-back terrapin are already exhibited by the Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium.

The catfish were caught wild in Virginia's James River, are all more than three years of age, and have white, cream-colored skin and pink eyes. They have been in the Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium less than a year. Catfish normally have poor eyesight, so the albinos are not particularly handicapped in that respect.

Large as silver dollars, the two albino turtles are housed in an individual tank by themselves. They were hatched last year in a Louisiana swamp, and were purchased from a fur trapper this spring. In three or four years, they will attain adult size. Their shells and flesh are the same pallid, yellowish color.

The trout come from a rare albino strain kept for many generations by the Fish and Wildlife Service fish hatchery in Saratoga, Wyo. Two months ago, they were brought to the Aquarium from the Service's Leetown, W. Va., hatchery, where they were hatched from eggs shipped from Wyoming. Now of fingerling size, the school of albino trout has survived only because of its unusually-supervised hatchery care.

Housed in a pool with two dozen normal diamond-back terrapins, the albino terrapin is full-grown. Its age is estimated from six to ten years. It arrived at the Aquarium in October 1947 from the Beaufort, N. C., Fish and Wildlife Service

fish hatchery, where it had been born. Because of its albinism, it has difficulty seeing food, and at feeding time, is more sluggish than its fellow terrapins.

Albinism is a condition in which there is an absence of pigment in the hair, eyes, and skin. It is unusually rare in nature, but has been observed in practically all animals. Albinos have skin of a milky hue. Their eyes are very sensitive to light, and have deep red pupils with pink or blue irises.

In the wild, albino animals rarely live to reach the reproductive stage. Because of their affliction, they are abnormally attractive to predators, and fall prey more easily than do the normal of their species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium is the oldest aquarium in the United States. It was established by the former U. S. Fish Commission in 1888. Now located in the Commerce Department Building in Washington, D. C., the Fish and Wildlife Service Aquarium has about 2,000 specimens of fish and aquatic animals on public display.

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